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Trinity's advanced placement program in terms of: Course offerings; numbers of schools, students, examinations, and colleges involved; grading system; and qualitative and quantitative course credit.

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# The Advanced Placement Program

By F. Gardiner F. Bridge, *Director of Admissions*

The increasing numbers of high school graduates who ardently seek a college education are creating unpredictable admission pressures and problems. Mr. Frank H. Bowles, president of the College Entrance Examination Board, at the annual meeting of the Board in October 1959, predicted these pressures will be solved by raising admission requirements by one complete academic year.

Although this article does not deal with admissions requirements or pressures, it is concerned with one phase of the curricular revolutions which are currently going forward in secondary schools throughout the country – that of offering college-level courses in secondary school to extremely able and well-motivated students. Secondary schools have conducted enriched programs and honors courses for years, but the intellectual demands of these courses did not go beyond the high school level. Phillips Exeter Academy over a century ago offered advanced work, and in isolated instances schools and colleges worked together in formulating plans which allowed properly prepared, competent students to enroll in advanced courses upon entrance to college. However, through the School and College Study of Admission with Advanced Standing in 1952, a formal, organized plan was conceived for the granting of advanced placement in college courses, college credit, or both upon entrance. The Study, involving twelve colleges (later fifteen) and eighteen participating secondary schools (both independent and public), helped in organizing college-level courses in the schools.

Trinity and numerous other colleges lent their support to the Study. The College made public her position in September 1954, when the faculty voted ". . . to empower the academic departments of the College to grant qualitative and advanced course credits to freshmen who have passed, with grades satisfactory to the departments concerned, examinations set up by the School and College Study on Admission with Advanced Standing." Soon, during the academic year 1955–1956, the program came under the direction of the College Board, and was appropriately named the Advanced Placement Program.

Basically, the Program "provides descriptions of college-level courses to be given in schools and prepares examinations based on these courses." It exists not only to challenge properly during the high school years the students who are well endowed academically, but also to further their development by providing the opportunity for greater enrichment while in college. With the colleges giving recognition to the fact that students can receive and successfully complete "college courses" in secondary school, the Program is truly a cooperative endeavor. For the schools which possess the proper facilities, qualified faculty, and the mature, interested students, the program is stimulating. The colleges stand to gain by providing a richer undergraduate experience and by getting a more capable and more educated group of students.

The Advanced Placement courses cover 11 fields: American History, Biology, Chemistry, European History, French, German, Latin, Literature and English Composition, Mathematics, Physics and Spanish. The growth in the numbers of schools, students, examinations and colleges involved is gratifying. In 1954, 18 schools participated, with 532 students taking 959 examinations and entering 94 colleges. By 1958, 359 schools were giving Advanced Placement courses for 3,717 students who took 6,804 examinations and entered 339 colleges.

Students involved in Advanced Placement courses may take normally one to three Advanced Placement Examinations in May, which are read and graded by committees of school and college teachers. The grades are on a five point scale: 5 (highest honors), 4 (honors), 3 (creditable), 2 (pass), and 1 (fail). In addition to receiving the grades of each Advanced Placement student entering Trinity, the College receives the students' examination papers and the school's recommendations of each student involved. This complete information is distributed to the different individual departments in the College for study and review.

The Faculty clarified the College's position still further in December 1957, by granting advanced placement and qualitative credit (Example: a successful Advanced Placement student in mathematics would not repeat freshman mathematics) to any student scoring a 5 or 4 on an Advanced Placement Test. A grade of 3 required departmental permission for placement or qualitative credit, while grades of 2 and 1 were considered unsatisfactory. As a result of this action, Advanced Placement students entering Trinity could appraise their position and determine which courses they could pursue at a level beyond the freshman year without duplication of effort.

By November 1959, the faculty effected a positive and more liberal modification in keeping with the ideals and spirit of the Advanced Placement Program. The departments of Biology, Chemistry, Classical Languages, English, German, History, Mathematics, Physics and Romance Languages (the only departments in which the college-level courses of the Advanced Placement Program are given) will now give advanced placement, qualitative credit, and quantitative credit to students scoring grades of 5, 4 and 3. This statement compares favorably with the most liberal of those of the colleges participating in the Advanced Placement Program, and is well in advance of the position taken by a host of others. It is expected that the Advanced Placement student will carry the full course load, but on his Trinity College transcript will be recorded the courses he has completed satisfactorily in the Advanced Placement Program in addition to the courses he takes in college.

Trinity is in a position today to offer a continuing, exciting educational experience to the well endowed, intellectually mature student who has exceptional desire for an education. The faculty action in November also dovetails appropriately with the development and modification of the College's curriculum. At Trinity, Advanced Placement students have performed capably as evidenced by their accomplishments in their first year of college. Similarly, the performance of students in other colleges has been high. The College has not entered into the program lightly. Trinity is assured of the soundness of future Advanced Placement students who come from schools just entering the program because of the scrutinizing eye of the Advanced Placement Program Director who works both with schools and colleges. Also, a special commission of school and college teachers and advisers appointed by the College Board supervises the policies of the program. In addition, the College is represented annually at conferences involving subject matter, examinations and the program in total. Alumni can be proud of the fact that here is further evidence that the College wishes to give her undergraduates the fullest education in the liberal arts.



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